

THE LEGEND OF ROMULUS AND REMUS

Long before there was a Rome, there was a kingdom in Italy called Alba Longa. Amulius, the king of Alba Longa, had come to power wrongly. He had overthrown the rightful king, his brother Numitor, killed Numitor's sons, and exiled him from the kingdom.

But Numitor had a daughter, Rhea Silvia, who gave birth to twin boys. Their father was Mars, the god of war. The evil Amulius was fearful that when they grew up, the twins would claim the throne. So Amulius sent Rhea Silvia to prison. Then he ordered a servant to put the babies in a basket and set them adrift in the Tiber River, where they would die of exposure.

The babies did not die, however. The river god Tiberinus rescued the twins and placed them on the bank under a fig tree. There they were fed and cared for by a she-wolf and a woodpecker, animals sacred to their father, Mars.

Some time later, a shepherd discovered the boys and took them home to his wife. The couple named the twins Romulus and Remus and raised them as their own. Romulus and Remus grew to be strong and courageous and became shepherds like their adopted father.



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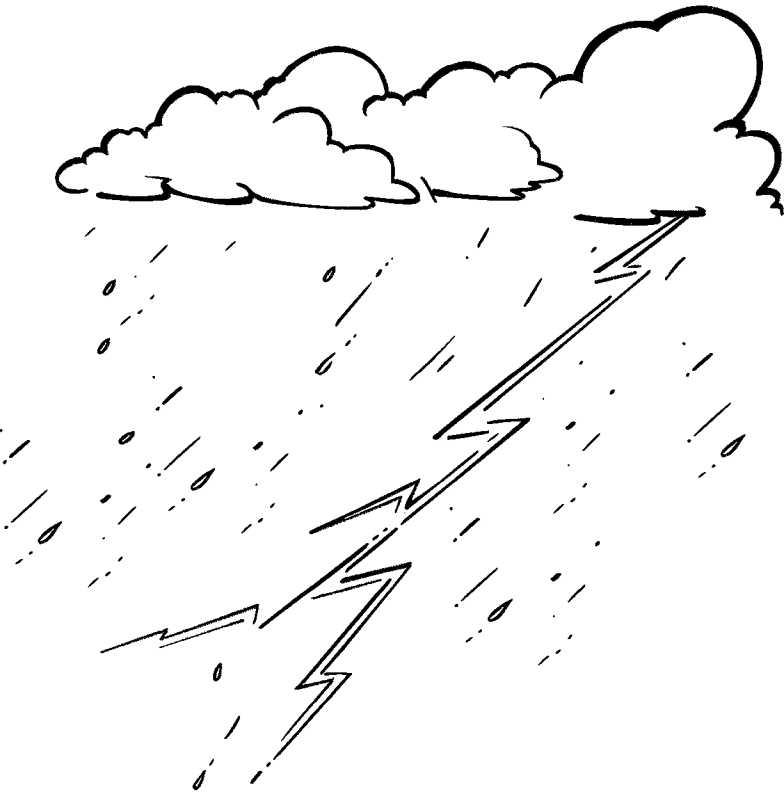
A MYTH THAT EXPLAINS
HOW ROME CAME TO BE



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Romulus then built his city on Palatine Hill. He named it Rome, after himself. Romulus became the first warrior-king of ancient Rome. He started Rome's first army and its first government.

Legend says that after ruling thirty years, Romulus disappeared into a violent storm. The ancient Romans believed that his father Mars carried him up to the heavens. There, Romulus was made a god and given the name was Quirinus.



One day, Remus fought with another group of shepherds over the use of land. Remus lost the fight and was taken to his captors' leader. As fate would have it, this leader was none other than Numitor. Remus's appearance and bearing made Numitor curious. He looked and acted more like a noble than a shepherd. So Numitor asked Remus to tell him about himself.

Remus told his story. It was then that Numitor realized that Remus was his grandson. Numitor sent for Romulus. Numitor explained to the boys about how he had been sent into exile and that it was their uncle Amulius who had tried to kill them.

Romulus and Remus vowed to seek revenge and overthrow their uncle. They did just that. They killed Amulius and restored Numitor as the rightful king of Alba Longa.

The twins chose not to stay in Alba Longa. They wanted to build their own city on the banks of the Tiber River where they had been rescued. When they reached this place, they could not agree on which of seven hills to build their city. A quarrel occurred, and Romulus killed his brother.

